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From: **Alana Garas** <garas@usna.edu>

Date: Fri, Mar 10, 2023 at 12:23 PM

Subject: Re: Email/letter to send via blast to all alumni and parents

To: TJ Grady (b) (6) <[\[REDACTED\]@usna.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@usna.com)>

Cc: Elizabeth Beedenbender (b) (6) <[\[REDACTED\]@usna.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@usna.com)>, Heather Epkins
<(b) (6) <[\[REDACTED\]@usna.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@usna.com)>>, Lori Coogan (b) (6) <[\[REDACTED\]@usna.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@usna.com)>, Steve Vahsen
<vahsen@usna.edu>, Wesley Huey (b) (6) <[\[REDACTED\]@usna.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@usna.com)>

Sir,

Thanks so much. We have the following text proposed to go out to all alumni and current parents, requesting that the attached PDF be either a usna.com hosted link or as an attachment. We expect for the press conference to begin at 1300 -- the report has been posted to sapr.mil.

(b) (5)



V/r
Alana



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
121 BLAKE ROAD
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-1300

10 March 2023

Dear Naval Academy Family,

Today the Department of Defense released the Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies for Academic Program Year (APY) 2021-2022. This year's report, which will be posted to www.sapr.mil, includes the results of the most recent Service Academy Gender Relations survey. This is the anonymous survey taken every other year that assesses the prevalence of sexual harassment and violence within the Brigade of Midshipmen; our upper class midshipmen participated this past spring. Of note, since there was no 2020 survey due to COVID, there was a four-year lapse before this most recent 2022 survey.

The results are, simply put, extremely disappointing.

The biggest takeaway is that incidents of unwanted sexual contact have increased significantly since the Brigade was last surveyed in 2018; the rates of unwanted sexual contact have trended upward for men and women at all three military service academies since 2014.

Evidence of increasing sexual misconduct at the Naval Academy is counter to our mission of developing future leaders who will instill and ensure a climate of dignity and respect, trust, collaboration, teamwork, as well as psychological and emotional safety.

This is not a problem we've been ignoring – it's a readiness issue that we have been actively focusing on for nearly two decades.

We established the USNA SHAPE and GUIDE programs in 2007. Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education (SHAPE) peer educators and midshipmen GUIDes (Guidance, Understanding, Information, Direction, and Education) serve as immediate leaders and resources for midshipman-level sexual assault prevention and response. Each SHAPE and GUIDE participant receives an in-depth and specialized education in various topics to serve as subject matter experts in their companies and are particularly employed for the broader discussion of dignity and respect within the brigade.

In 2013, we funded an O-6 billet for assignment as the USNA Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Officer (SAPRO) to empower and support our on-site Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates, and to coordinate our programs and policies with the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense.

We have a robust Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention and Education (SHAPE) program where each midshipman receives extensive prevention training across their four years at USNA, including leveraging world-class experts and speakers. We conduct small group training and

targeted discussions among each Academy year group to advance both individual awareness and common commitment to ending this serious challenge to the Naval Academy's mission and to the welfare of our midshipmen.

After each annual report, we've taken the recommendations and suggestions for improvements as directives for change and worked to implement them. We've sought feedback from subject matter experts as well as our midshipmen by conducting continuing self-assessments of our programs.

An evaluation of our Peer Advisor program is underway to assess how the program is promoting the well-being, psychological health, and resilience of midshipmen at the Naval Academy. The Peer Advisor program is one of two peer-to-peer tools specifically developed to better support and advise midshipmen facing personal challenges while attending USNA – the other being USNA's Diversity Peer Educators.

Finally, in matters of education and prevention, we are continuing an evaluation of our SHAPE program. This ongoing review began in 2021, involves two class years of midshipmen over the course of two years, and will be making data-driven recommendations for improving USNA's primary sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention program.

The Annual Report confirms our belief that alcohol plays a significant role in instances of unwanted sexual contact. Over the past 18 months, we've implemented and subsequently improved an Alcohol Related Incident (ARI) Reduction Plan across the Brigade. We also established USNA alcohol policies focused on alcohol "deglamorization" and promoting safer and healthier choices related to alcohol use.

Our team has also developed the first USNA Comprehensive Prevention Plan, integrating prevention elements of sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination, suicide, and alcohol/drug abuse. This will serve as an ongoing effort to capture best practices and lessons learned across a spectrum of behavioral issues to better promote the health and welfare of the brigade and the larger USNA community.

To be clear - it's not enough to have outstanding resources to respond to and support the survivors of sexual assault. We take every complaint or allegation of sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact seriously, to include thorough investigation and review for potential disciplinary action in accordance with the USNA Conduct System, local laws, and the Uniformed Code of Military Justice.

That said, the current situation is unacceptable and we must improve our culture. We are better than this. Effectively addressing unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment requires fundamental changes in order to build healthy command climates and safe and respectful living and working environments. We will continue to implement needed reforms to strengthen

institutional trust, increase accountability for sexual violence, and to set the conditions for dignity and respect across the Academy.

Some of the best and brightest young men and women America has to offer come to the Naval Academy to develop into our nation's next generation of military leaders. We have a responsibility to them, to their future Sailors and Marines, and to our community to ensure that the U.S. Naval Academy is an environment in which they can develop without the fear of sexual assault and harassment.

We know we have work to do.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean S. Buck". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

S. S. BUCK
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy
Superintendent